



5 August 2005



Labor Day 2005

1. Labor Day is observed to honor the accomplishments of American workers whose sacrifices continue to make our Nation great. Labor Day also signifies the traditional end of summer and the coming of a new fiscal year. As FY 05 draws to a close, I ask that we all recommit to taking care of one another and our loved ones in FY 06. *Don't walk by.*
2. FY 05 will long be remembered as one of the worst years in our Army for Soldier non-combat losses. With just under 2 months left in FY 05, the number of Soldiers killed in on- and off-duty accidents is almost 50 percent higher than it was at this point in FY 01. It is a real tragedy. Since February 2005, the Army has lost over 120 Soldiers. These losses are personal and the void they leave cannot be filled at the recruiting station. While families are losing fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters, the Army is losing expertise, experience, and camaraderie every time we lose one of our Soldiers.
3. USAREUR has also lost its share of Soldiers to accidents. Each death is its own tragedy; however, we are doing a bit better in taking care of our own than the Army average. As of today, the accidental fatality rate for USAREUR is about 50 percent lower than the Army rate. In addition, we are closing in on the Secretary of Defense goal of reducing the number of accidental deaths recorded in FY 02 by 50 percent in FY 05. The good news is that Soldiers are alive today as a direct result of your efforts to reduce risks.
4. We are making progress and we have room for thanks. But, more hard work lies ahead if we are going to convince our Soldiers to stop killing themselves. By FY 08 we need to reduce accidental deaths by 75 percent. We absolutely can reach this goal, but it will take directed and focused emphasis on safety. Let's do it! Are you with me?
5. If you are deployed, thank you for your service. If you are here in Europe and not deployed, I hope you can relax a bit this Labor Day weekend. I ask that you continue to remain vigilant. Your efforts to reduce accidents have met with some success. Let's keep up the effort and continue to dedicate ourselves to taking care of our most valuable weapon system: our Soldiers. By setting the example, doing what is right, establishing and upholding high standards, and not "walking by," we can help ensure *No Loss of Life* this Labor Day holiday weekend and in FY 06.



B. B. BELL
General, US Army
Commanding

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